

CHILDREN AND YOUTH: Investing in the Leaders of Tomorrow

All of the Summits of the Americas have highlighted the rights of the region's children and the need to develop their potential, to protect them from discrimination, abuse, exploitation, and violence, and to promote their participation in all matters affecting them.

At the Quebec City Summit, leaders agreed to intensify cooperation aimed at reducing cases of international child abduction by one of their parents, and to share best practices to support families and to meet the needs of children and adolescents. The leaders also pledged to support the work of the Pan-American Health Organization, the Inter-American Children's Institute, and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights to promote the rights and well-being of children and youth.



School children work on arts and crafts in the "Luisa Makin" day care center for underprivileged children in Bahia, Brazil. (Alejandro Lipszyc, World Bank)

In support of these goals, the United States provides technical assistance to eradicate and prevent exploitative or hazardous child labor. The U.S. is involved in the development of a new regional plan to prevent and remedy child abduction. The U.S. Department of State's Office of Trafficking in Persons, in conjunction with the Department of Labor, runs programs throughout the region in support of Summit initiatives to protect children and youth from exploitation and trafficking.

U.S. ACTIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE HEMISPHERE'S AGENDA

- The U.S. Department of Labor prepares *Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor*, an annual report presenting information on the nature and extent of child labor, as well as efforts being made by governments to eliminate the worst forms. The report covers over 140 countries and territories worldwide, including 31 countries and five territories in the Americas.
- The U.S. supports bilateral programs such as the **Costa Rica Protection/Prosecution Program**, which will improve investigation and prosecution of cases involving the sexual exploitation of minors; the **Central American Street Children Program**, which will assure the repatriation of trafficked children and provide psychological and social assistance; and a three-year project to identify strategies for addressing child prostitution in the Dominican Republic.